

This investigation examines the allegation that South Bend Police Chief Ronald Teachman did not assist a fellow South Bend Police Officer who responded to an altercation complaint at the Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Recreation Center in South Bend, IN, on April 22, 2013.

The allegation was brought against Chief Teachman by Reverend Greg Brown. Rev. Brown stated that he was across the street from MLK at College and Linden for personal business on the day in question. While at this location, he observed a commotion in the west parking lot of the MLK. He then observed Lt. Newton come out to where the commotion was and disperse the crowd. Rev. Brown did agree that it did not appear that Lt. Newton had any issues in handling the situation. He later observed Chief Teachman and MLK Director Maurice Scott come outside of the center and stand near the fence of the playground. After Chief Teachman left the MLK, an unidentified male told Rev. Brown that Chief Teachman was inside the MLK while Lt. Newton dealt with the altercation and would not come outside to help. Rev. Brown did speak to some people later inside the MLK about what had happened. He said that they told him that the chief did not come outside and stood at the door and messed with the floor mats and spoke with Director Scott. Rev. Brown stated that he tried on different occasions to speak with Chief Teachman about the incident. He stated that Chief Teachman would not meet/speak with him. This was the reason he filed the complaint with the South Bend Common Council. He went on to say that if Chief Teachman would have met with him to discuss the issue, there would have been no need to file the formal complaint.

Based off of this complaint, the following interviews were conducted:

Reverent Greg Brown – Complainant

Jewell Davis – MLK employee who made notification of altercation to Lt. Newton.

Kisha Hoover – Witness inside at MLK at time of altercation.

Josephine Merriweather – MLK employee who notified Chief Teachman of fight.

Maurice Scott – Director of MLK who saw Chief Teachman during the altercation.

Lt. Dave Newton – SBPD Officer who met with Chief Teachman and handled altercation.

Chief Ronald Teachman – Accused of not backing up Lt. Newton at the altercation.

Each interview was recorded and a summary of the interview was typed. As part of this summary, Lt. Newton and Chief Teachman's account of the events will be summarized below. Due to variations in the statements of the witnesses, please

refer to the individual interviews of Mr. Scott, Mr. Davis, Ms. Hoover, and Ms. Merriweather.

On April 22, 2013, South Bend Police Chief Ronald Teachman and South Bend Police Lieutenant Dave Newton had a meeting at the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center in South Bend, IN. Lt. Newton stated that the chief had talked with numerous officers, being that he was new to the department and was meeting with him for the same purpose. Lt. Newton said they discussed issues with the police department and other general topics. He described the meeting as cordial and said it last approximately 1 ½ hours.

When the meeting was over, they began to walk out of the office at the MLK where they had met. This office is located near the front entrance of the MLK. Lt. Newton said there was a female sitting at the check in desk near the room they had their meeting. While standing outside the office, Chief Teachman informed Lt. Newton that he needed to use the restroom. He then asked Lt. Newton to watch his briefcase while he went to the restroom. Chief Teachman walked down the hall and took a left to get to the restroom. Lt. Newton stated that as soon as Chief Teachman took the left turn that MLK employee Jewell Davis came into the center. Mr. Davis stated that there was a big fight and that guns were involved.

Lt. Newton said he walked outside with Mr. Davis and the parking lot on the west side of the center was full of people where the fight was allegedly occurring. He said he could tell that the people outside had just finished fighting, but that people were starting to disperse. He was unsure how many individuals were involved, but estimated the ages of people involved to be between 15-19. He did call out to dispatch on his police radio (Attachments 5c and 5d). He said he received a response from dispatch and also could overhear radio traffic that all the other units were busy dealing with two other incidents in other areas of the city. He said it took 2-4 minutes for the people outside to disperse and that he did not have any problems handling the incident.

He did add that he felt he needed back-up, which was why he called for back-up to dispatch. He then called back to dispatch and informed dispatch that the people at his location were leaving. He also stated that he had his hand on his duty weapon when he responded based on the information Mr. Harris [sic] gave, stating there were weapons involved. No one was arrested and Lt. Newton did not observe any weapons.

While outside, MLK Director Maurice Scott came out of the center. Following behind him approximately fifteen feet was Chief Teachman. He stated the chief had his bag and jacket with him at that time. Mr. Scott checked to see if Lt. Newton was alright. Mr. Scott and the chief talked by the playground and Lt. Newton walked by them and went back into the center to gather his items from the previous meeting. Mr. Scott came into the center after the chief had left and spoke with Lt. Newton. Mr. Scott told Lt. Newton, "You know that your chief wasn't coming out here to help you." Lt. Newton advised Mr. Scott that the chief was in the restroom and would have come out. Mr. Scott told him he wasn't. A female sitting at the front desk (Believed to be MLK Employee Josephine Merriweather) informed Lt. Newton that she had told the chief when he came back from the restroom that he was dealing with a fight outside. She went on to say that after she told the chief that he just stood in the foyer area of the center. Lt. Newton did not speak with the chief concerning the incident until after the complaint was filed with the South Bend Common Council. When the incident was over that day, he gathered his items and left the MLK.

Chief Teachman did not provide any reason as to why he was not outside with him. When asked if he was upset after he was told that the chief remained inside after he was told of the fight Lt. Newton said, "Not really...I wasn't surprised either...it's tough out there." Lt. Newton said it is intimidating dealing with that type of incident. He also stated that the chief was not in uniform at the time and the kids who were outside would not have known who he was.

Lt. Newton stated approximately a month later his captain had made a vague comment at a meeting about what had occurred at the MLK. Lt. Newton said that this surprised him because he had not said anything about what occurred. A few days later he received a text message from a fellow officer who told him to watch a news story on ABC 57 dealing with the chief not backing up an officer. He went on to say that he did not see the complainant, Reverend Greg Brown, at the MLK on the day in question.

Chief Teachman also sent Lt. Newton an email on his personal email account to Lt. Newton's personal email account asking if he knew what the incident was and who the officer was that was involved. I questioned why the chief would send him an email to his personal email account asking about what occurred being that he was there. Lt. Newton said that, "in this town, nothing is strange." (Lt. Newton provided a print out of the email conversations between him and the Chief. This is

attachment 5b.) In the email, the chief said that he thought another officer was dealing with the incident while they had their meeting. Lt. Newton responded back and stated that it was only him.

Lt. Newton was later confronted by Lt. Ross of the South Bend Police Department Internal Affairs. Lt. Ross questioned Lt. Newton about what had occurred. During the interview, Chief Teachman knocked on the door and was let in by Lt. Ross. Lt. Ross offered Chief Teachman to sit down, but the chief declined and left. When asked if he found it ironic that the chief would show up in the middle of his interview and he responded by saying, "I know bad acting when I see it." Lt. Newton was asked if he felt this was a form of intimidation by the chief and he stated "probably." Lt. Ross then had Lt. Newton complete a report on what occurred on April 22, 2013 (Attachment 5a). He added that he did not complete a report the day of the incident because he did not see any weapons and it was just a call to service.

Chief Teachman believed the incident in question happened on April 22, 2013, at approximately 6pm. Chief Teachman stated that he was meeting with Lt. Dave Newton at the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center on the day in question. Since taking office Chief Teachman was meeting with various officers and command staff to get to know them. That was the purpose of the meeting with Lt. Newton. Upon arriving at the MLK, he went into the office area and met with Lt. Newton. The office that was used was that of MLK Director Maurice Scott. Lt. Newton brought food and a large soda to the meeting. Chief Teachman stated that beverage was of importance because he had several cups of coffee and drank a large portion of the soda. While meeting with Lt. Newton, he felt the need to use the restroom. Chief Teachman later added that he has had prostate issues as it deals with using the restroom. He said that during this time, an unknown person came into the center and told Lt. Newton and Chief Teachman that there might be a fight outside. Chief Teachman said that he did not know if it was a fight as such, but a disturbance. The only description he could provide of the person who made the notification was a young African-American. Chief Teachman said that when he initially came into the center he observed school age kids outside playing. He therefore thought when the unknown person said there was a fight that it involved school age children. He went on to say that he believed Lt. Newton thought the same thing. He said that they both started to get up to handle the situation at which time Lt. Newton told the chief that he could handle it. Chief Teachman said that Lt. Newton made this statement several times. Chief Teachman was informed that of all the people interviewed, that he was the only person up to this point that said he was present at the initial notification of the fight. Chief Teachman stated that was the way he recalled it to the best of his memory.

(May it be noted that during Lt. Newton's interview, he was specifically asked if he told Chief Teachman that he did not need to come out to the fight. Lt. Newton said he never told the chief this because the chief was not present in the room when he was notified of the fight. Jewell Davis, the person who notified Lt. Newton of the fight, also stated that Chief Teachman was not present when he told Lt. Newton of the fight. Also, Jewell Davis is 66 years old and Chief Teachman said a young male notified them.)

Chief Teachman said that he told Lt. Newton that he needed to use the restroom and that he would meet him back in the office. Chief Teachman was unsure if he just urinated or how long he was gone. After using the restroom, an unknown individual told Chief Teachman that there was still an issue outside and that he was needed outside. He further stated that this person questioned why he was not outside helping. Chief Teachman was not sure if this was the same person who made the initial notification or not. Chief Teachman said he immediately went outside and observed Lt. Newton walking back up to the doors. He was unsure of the amount of time it was from the initial notification of the altercation until he made it outside, but estimated it as minutes. Upon arriving outside he asked Lt. Newton what occurred and he stated, "Oh, it's crazy. I'm all set now, but there was a problem." He said the situation was much different than what he originally thought was going on. Lt. Newton went back inside while Chief Teachman stayed outside and spoke with Director Scott. Chief Teachman later went back inside and gathered his belongings and left. Chief Teachman advised that Director Scott was outside with the altercation before him. Chief Teachman did not recall being notified of the altercation by a female. During the interviews conducted, MLK Employee Josephine Merriweather stated she was the person who told the chief of the fight after he returned to the office area.

While discussing his statement that he was present when Lt. Newton was notified of the altercation, he informed me that he had emails between him and Lt. Newton using personal email accounts. In these emails he was attempting to determine what occurred. In the emails (Attachment 5b are the emails provided by Lt. Newton) the chief questions Lt. Newton about which officer handled the call. Lt. Newton informs him that he was the officer and that he called for backup once outside because there was a large party with weapons. Chief Teachman said that the information about the weapons may have been something Lt. Newton obtained once outside and that he did not know this. Chief Teachman read one other email in which Lt. Newton said he was informed of a fight with weapons after he left to use the restroom. I then questioned Chief Teachman about the fact that even Lt. Newton

said he was not present when he was notified. Chief Teachman responded by saying that he was notified of the initial fight by the unknown black male, but that Lt. Newton was told of weapons after he left to use the restroom. He further stated that he did not have a radio with him and did not overhear any radio traffic.

Chief Teachman stated that he immediately went outside to assist after being notified the second time of the altercation. Chief Teachman did not recall speaking to anyone prior to going outside to assist Lt. Newton. This statement does contradict what other witnesses stated. Chief Teachman was asked if he recalled adjusting the floor mats near the front doors, introducing himself to two females, speaking with the females about their church, and then going back and adjusting the floor mats again as was stated by other witnesses. At first Chief Teachman stated, "Absolutely not," to these questions. He then said, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Floor mats?" He then said, "Gosh, was it there that day." He now said he had a vague memory, but did not think it was there that day referring to adjusting floor mats. Chief Teachman spent over a minute talking about his recollection of possibly adjusting floor mats at the MLK that day.

Chief Teachman said that after Lt. Newton told him he would handle the situation that he was in so much discomfort needing to use the restroom that he used it. He then returned and once being notified the second time of the altercation he then went outside. He stated that he asked Lt. Ross of the South Bend Internal Affairs to try and get the radio recordings which he could not locate when this occurred. Chief Teachman went on to say that Lt. Ross went out to the MLK, without being asked to do so, and attempted to obtain recordings. Chief Teachman said he never asked Lt. Ross to go to the MLK and this was done on his own initiative. He did add that he went to Lt. Ross' office on an unrelated issue and observed Lt. Ross and Lt. Newton talking. He later learned that Lt. Ross was talking to Lt. Newton about the incident. Chief Teachman said he did not ask Lt. Ross to interview Lt. Newton.